

The Grandeurs of
Niagara Falls

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THE GRANDEURS OF

Niagara Falls

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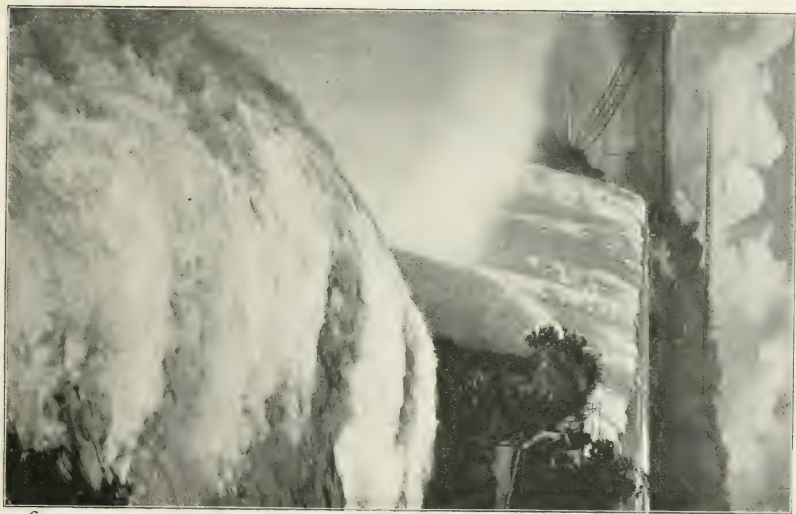
Niagara Falls in Summer.—Niagara Falls is between Lakes Erie and Ontario, distant about twenty miles from Buffalo. Niagara River has a total fall of three hundred and thirty feet, in the thirty-six miles of its course as follows: The smaller Rapids above the Falls, fifteen feet; the principal water-fall, one hundred and sixty feet; the large Rapids below, fifty-five feet, and from the Falls to Lewiston, through the gorge, one hundred feet. The summer time clothes the margins of the Falls with beautiful verdure, and it is then that they are visited by the largest number of tourists, drawn to this wonder spot from all the countries of the world.



American Fall From Prospect Point.—A particularly expansive and impressive view is obtainable from a spot called Prospect Point, whence the mightiest sweep of the awe-compelling flood is both seen and best realized, for as the eye takes in the wonderful scene of nature in her most tumultuous mood, the ear is filled with an undying roar of the impetuous waters, and mists rise as if to hide its fury.



The American Fall.—Including the Lunar, or Central Fall, the American Fall is about 1,000 feet wide; and has a fall of 164 feet. The rapids above the falls descend some 40 feet in the last half mile of their course before plunging into the Gorge. The American Fall, although not so large as the Canadian Fall, is more permanent, showing practically no recession during the last fifty years. The reason for this is, that the force of the water is not great enough to move the large boulders upon which it falls, and which protect the softer shale of which the cliff is composed.



As aptly put by one of the world's famous photographers, "It would take a lifetime to see the Niagara Gorge properly. One might take a hundred photographs a day and yet miss something that is peculiarly and characteristically interesting. There is no scenery in America to equal that of the Niagara Gorge." The picture on the opposite page is taken from a point about a mile below the Falls.



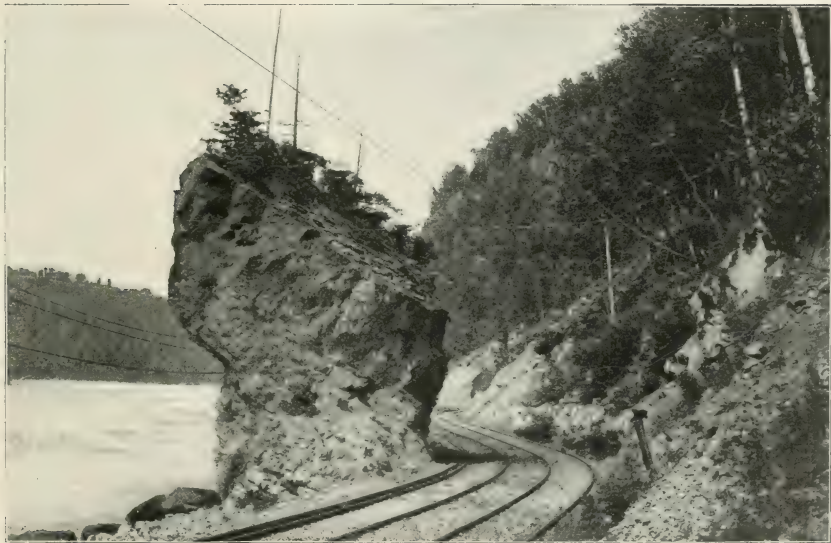
At the Foot of Centre Fall.—Centre Fall issues from between Luna and Goat Islands, shown in the photograph. At the shore foot under the Fall is a place called Cave of the Winds, formed by thirty feet of projecting limestone that has resisted the action of the corroding waters while the shaly substratum directly under the ledge has been eaten away. The so-called cave is one hundred feet in height and sixty feet in depth, and can be reached by a perpendicular winding stairway from Goat Island. The cave derives its name from the constant pressure of atmosphere, caused by the reflex of the falling water, which resembles a storm of great violence.



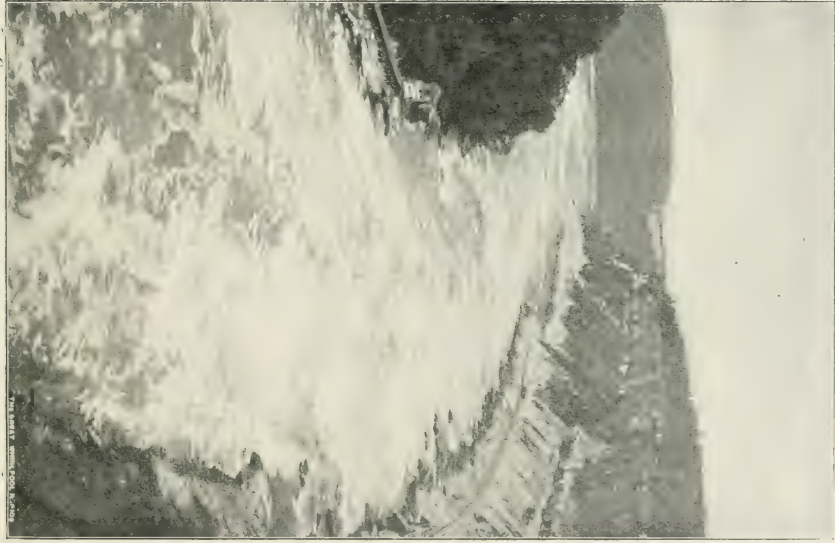
Whirlpool Rapids above the Bridge. Upper Whirlpool Rapids are about three miles below the Falls, at a point where the gorge is so narrow that the vast flow of water is brought suddenly into a constricted space, which, by the rapid current is caused to leap fully thirty feet above the natural river level. The noise of this tossing, swirling, foaming struggle of maddened waters, decending at a grade of one hundred feet to the mile, and a depth of three hundred feet is truly appalling as well as deafening. The canyon walls are not more than three hundred feet apart, and the rushing flow between them is at a speed of twenty-seven miles an hour.



A Trolley Line through the Gorge.—The ruggedness and picturesqueness of nature about Niagara Falls has been seriously modified by the arts of man, the latest invasion being the construction of a trolley line through the gorge, starting at Prospect Park and passing close to the Whirlpool Rapids and the river until it reaches Queenstown Heights. The ride is one of the sensations, of pleasure and of surprise, which sometimes approach trepidation, as towering rocks, looming threateningly over the tracks, cut through bluffs, produce a feeling of insecurity.



Gorge of the Niagara River—Seven miles of the wildest beauty encompasses the river after it plunges from brink to bottom of the precipice. The Gorge of Niagara River extends from the Falls to Queenstown, seven miles below. In the course of its tortuous and tumultuous winding it has an additional fall of one hundred feet.



View of the rapids from the bridge.

Entrance to the Gorge. The two railroad bridges spanning the Gorge below the Falls, give access to Canada, as well as providing the most direct route between the East and the great West. The cantilever bridge of the Michigan Central Railroad was built in 1882; while the steel arch bridge, built in 1897 by the Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada, replaces the familiar old Suspension Bridge, which was long one of the wonders of this point. The Grand Trunk bridge is said to be the largest arch in the world.



Gorge of the Niagara River.—The Gorge itself, worn through countless aeons of time, as the cataract slowly retreated, is for the most part, a perpendicular mass of rock. The chasm is winding, and at one point makes an abrupt turn to the right, and in this angle is found the famous Whirlpool. The Gorge is a perfect mine to the geologist, for here ready at hand is outlined on the eternal page of Nature the formation of the rock, a study of which tells the story of the Falls.



The Suspension Bridge from Queenstown to Lewiston.—

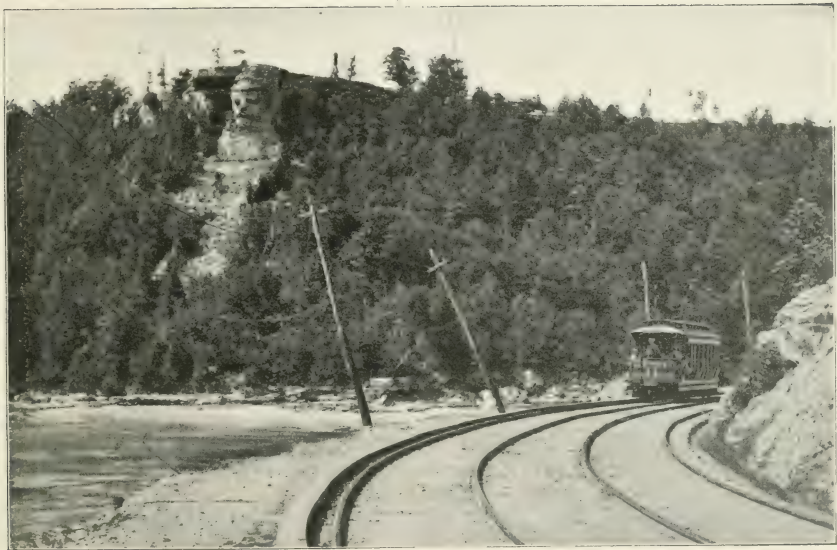
The Suspension Bridge over the Niagara River, above Lewiston, is 1050 feet long, and stretches sixty feet above the surface of the water. It was opened to the public in July, 1899. It is the only suspension bridge crossing the river, the others being constructed on the arch or cantilever principle. The bridge practically connects Lewiston on the American side, and Queens-town, named after Queen Charlotte, on the Canadian side. The first Suspension Bridge at this point was erected in 1850, and was wrecked by a hurricane in 1865.



Just below Ongiara Park stands an enormous rock, that rises from the edge of the water and towers high above. What cataclysm of Nature detached this rock from the cliff above and sent it thundering down the precipice to find a resting place on the river's brink is not known. Ever since white men first explored the Gorge the Giant Rock has stood like a silent sentinel.



For years every photograph taken of the Whirlpool from the American side has shown, apparently carved in the top of this rocky eminence, a strange resemblance to a human face. Within the last few years the action of the atmosphere has crumbled the rock to such an extent that the face is discernable to the naked eye. It has been named "The Demon of the Gorge," and it stands there immovable and inscrutable, keeping watch and ward over the awful secrets of Nature and the mysterious Whirlpool.



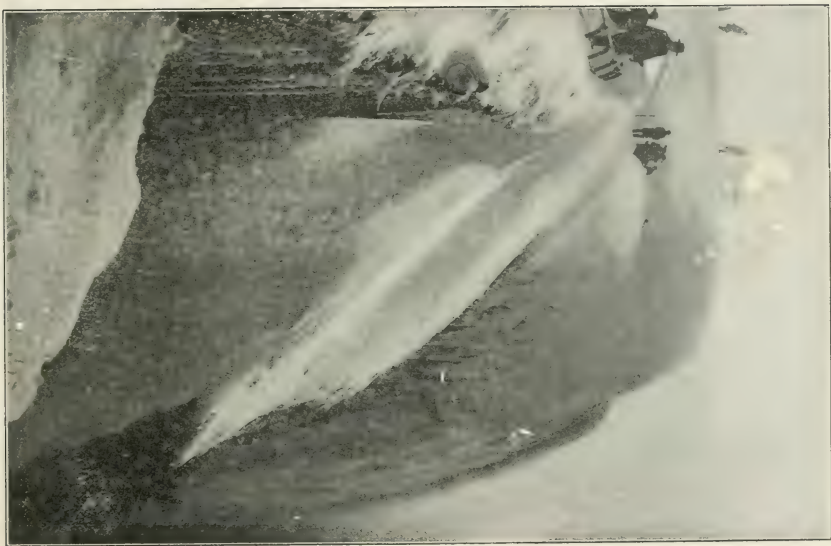
Lewiston.—Lewiston is the spot where the first white man who ever entered the Niagara River, so far as history tells, landed after sailing up from Lake Ontario. This was in 1678, and the explorer who braved the entrance to an unknown river was the intrepid La Salle. In his search for a portage La Salle ascended as far as the lower rapids. Finding no safe landing place he returned to Lewiston, and there built a cab'in, surrounded by a palisade, as a storehouse and base of supplies for his projected expedition above the Falls, which he had not yet seen. From this point a portage was established, the trail leading up the mountain above Lewiston and traversing the table-land above the cliff to a point above Echota. The Breck Monument on Queenstown Heights is seen in the distance.



The Whirlpool.—The Whirlpool is a mile below the Rapids. The popular conception of it is that of maelstrom, a vortex of water swirling in gradually narrowing circles to a depressed centre. Instead, the force of the water pouring into this basin raises it in the middle to a distance of three feet above the outer surface. The Whirlpool is the natural result of the mighty body of water rushing into a confined space and seeking an outlet. Bodies, driftwood, everything in fact that goes over the Falls, must eventually find its way to the Whirlpool, where, after circling for days, perhaps, it is either thrown out upon the bank or is carried by the outlet on down to where the River empties into Lake Ontario.



Prospect Point in Winter.—Here again we stand on the brink of the American Fall in winter at Prospect Park. The Falls take on a new beauty; it is unique because nothing like this is known in all the range of cataract and fall and torrent anywhere in the known world. Other great cataracts like that of Caroni River, in South America, or the Falls of the Zambesi, in distant Africa, are located in tropic climes beyond the clutch of the Ice King's eager fingers. Others such perhaps as the great Falls of Labrador, may present sights as unusual as Niagara in winter, but less than a dozen pairs of Caucasian eyes have looked upon the tremendous volume of these rolling waters imprisoned in the heart of the distant North.



Canadian Fall in Winter.—And now across the Ice Bridge the tourist takes his way to the Canadian side. Standing in the shelter of the overhanging precipice decorated with icicle and organ-pipe in clearest crystal, he looks across at the majestic plunge of the Canadian Fall as it rushes over the ice-bordered brink into the unknown depths beneath. It is a repetition of the story in black and white; the culmination of artistic beauty; the work of a world builder.



Terrapin Rock in Winter.— Let the reader of these lines, if he can, conjure up in imagination anything more wierdly beautiful than this view of Terrapin Rock in winter. The distant Falls are swathed in mist. The faraway Canadian bluffs are masses of silvery whiteness. The nearer foreground is a tangled mass of snow and ice and denuded foliage. Yet beneath this iron clasp of winter the torrent of Niagara rolls on unchecked, knowing no master, and stayed by no barrier.



An Ice Mountain at the Foot of American Fall.—It was an exceptionally cold winter that produced the remarkable ice formation photographed above. The base of the mountain is cakes of ice that, having become detached above, come tumbling over the brink and gradually accumulate as the spray freezes as it falls upon them. Thereafter, the weather continuing severe, the mountain increases rapidly until it reaches more than half the height of the cataract, providing vantage points for visitors to observe more closely the grandest thing in nature.



American Fall from Goat Island—Winter.—In the foreground and in the upper distance is presented all that there is of life and motion in this picture of what may be termed the Ice King's wrath. The tumbling torrent races past; the dashing spray turns to ice on either side; even the brink of the precipice is a jagged mass of crystal. It was in the torrent in the foreground that the mysterious Francis Abbott, the Hermit of the Falls, lost his life. He lived for two years on one of the islands in Niagara River above the Falls. No one knew whence he came. The waters fascinated him and in the end, one bright day in June, sixty-two years ago, they lured him to his death. A week afterward the torn and mangled body of the hermit was found at the mouth of the river and buried within sound of the Falls that he loved so well.







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